



***A
Conversation
with
Hani
Almadhoun***

***The Final Straw Radio
March 13, 2024***

As a mid-week special, we're releasing a conversation we had last weekend with Hani Almadhoun, a Palestinian-American journalist from Gaza and living in Virginia. Mr Almadhoun is also Director of Philanthropy at UNRWA USA, an independent charity to support the UN organization by the same name. In the chat, he speaks about conditions generally and for his family specifically in Gaza as well as the soup kitchen that his brother founded in north Gaza (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/Hot-meals-in-gaza-daily> , on Instagram at @GazaSoup-Kitchen).

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TFSR: Would you please just introduce yourself and tell listeners a bit about what you do insofar as it's comfortable to do so?

Hani Almadhoun: Thank you for having me. My name is Hani Almadhoun. In my day job, I'm the director of philanthropy at UNRWA USA. That's an independent American charity that supports the great work of UNRWA. I am here to speak in my personal capacity. I have family in the north of Gaza. My heart goes out to them. These are my family and my neighbors. I live in Northern Virginia; I came here to just speak with some folks in the area who want to do a lot of good for the Palestinians in these difficult hours. I love the work I'm doing, and how could I not step up and speak to people who want to listen and engage about this positively and inclusively?

TFSR: Absolutely. So UNRWA, which is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, is an organization that has existed for 74 years. Would you speak a little bit about UNRWA itself as an organization and the work that it typically has been doing?

HA: Sure. UNRWA is the UN agency that does the work for Palestine Refugees. It is 75 years old, and it works in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and including East Jerusalem. It does a lot to meet the education needs of the Palestinian kids. There are more than half a million kids that go UNRWA schools. There are 7 million patient visits a year and there are more than 2.5 million people in food assistance from the Palestine refugee community. It's an agency that does a lot of its work by voluntary contribution. Mind you, I'm affiliated with UNRWA USA, which is an independent American charity that supports the work of UNRWA. It's honestly the largest humanitarian actor in Gaza right now. Not only are they responding in Gaza, but they're also working in difficult places like the West Bank and Lebanon, where they may not be reported in the news because what's happening in Gaza is so horrifying that it overshadows any other struggle or tragedies that are in the neighborhood.

TFSR: Absolutely. Feel free to not speak on this at all, but I understand that UNRWA has come under some negative scrutiny since last year. Negative media propaganda, I would say. Do you care to speak on that? What's behind it? Not to answer it, because I don't want to make you do that, but just speak on what is going on there?

HA: Absolutely. There is no shortage of pundits who can analyze this and just, say "X, Y, or Z." I appreciate that the UNRWA is able to work under difficult

circumstances. There's more than 120 UNRWA staff that were killed in Gaza, the largest in the history of the United Nations. It is a very difficult time, there is always publicity, sometimes good and bad. I appreciate the entity and I know that they're working as hard as they can to deliver aid to folks who need it. I hope that they're able to receive the funding that they're owed to do the programs that are needed, because every solution that people come up with all leads to UNRWA.

TFSR: Absolutely. Is there anything that listeners can do to help, specifically the cause of UNRWA?

I also have a question about whether are there any other on-the-ground efforts in Gaza that you want to uplift that are community to community folks just helping each other?

HA: Yeah, absolutely. As an American, we could always talk to our members of congress, we could talk to the media about what we're doing today, we could write a letter to the editor, we could think about companies that are maybe complicit in this. I'm saying this in my Palestinian American hat who has the freedom to express themselves in this great country of ours. Also, there's a lot of great NGOs that are doing work in Gaza. Definitely, UNRWA is the largest actor, so that's where we are. Personally, because of the restrictions in the north, my family started a soup kitchen. My brother Mahmoud started one and that's really why I wanted to be here and talk about that because it's the one thing that gives me a positive dose every morning in an ocean of horrifying and traumatizing news.

TFSR: Absolutely. Will you talk a little bit more about Mahmoud and about his endeavors in the soup kitchen and anything that listeners can do to support or donate?

HA: Well, positive thoughts and prayers are welcome, I don't want to discount those. In November on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, we woke up to the news around 3:00am here in America. Somebody called me about my brother, Majed. His entire family, his wife, and their home were destroyed. They've been killed and they're never coming back. From there, you start the journey of asking "what is the meaning of life?" and your faith gets questioned. At the end of the day, we are mourning. Then a few weeks later, we see my brother on TV, nearly unclothed by Israeli officers. It was traumatizing because, this is my brother. One brother is dead, and there is another one who may never come back. We spoke out, and there was interest in the national media in the US. About 20 hours later, he was released after being humiliated, being called names, blindfolded, his hands tied behind his back. He thought he was never going to come back from this. I asked him if this really

impacted or changed his worldview, and he said, indeed, it had because he thought he was dead and now he has a new lease on life. As a lot of people know, Gaza is a very small place. Remember we're not talking about North Carolina and South Carolina distances; we're talking about a place that's 10 minutes east to west. Let that sit for a minute.

There is no food allowed in the north. At least 12 people we know have died from malnourishment and starvation. This is not fake news. These are families and people we know and we can verify. So we started the idea in January. I told my brother Mahmoud--somebody dared me actually and said "Can you get through to the north?" And I said, "No." We can't get flour or rice; these are the staples. There is no pasta--they ate all the pasta in the last five months, now we're getting into the sixth month. It's a small area. Then we went to a local kitchen and we ordered some rice, they had a couple of rice trays, so we bought those. We gave them away and then the next day we went back and he said "No, I am out of business. I don't have any rice. And if I find it, it's 10 times the price." We're like, "Hmm, I have some money from my friends and my family. I want to do something." So I told Mahmoud, "My dad has some spices, dips, and things like ketchup." In fact, people eat ketchup right now so if you can find it, it's a very expensive item. We did that for two weeks. Then Mahmoud said, "Hey, how about starting a community kitchen?" I said, "Oh, I love the idea of a soup kitchen. How would you going to make it work?" He said, "Well, we happen to be in Beit Lahia, I know a couple of farmers." When the Israeli army pulled back a little bit, they were able to go to their farms and pick whatever. The first day he picked overgrown zucchinis. These zucchinis were supposed to be tiny, but because nobody picked them in two months, they were pumpkin size. He bought a bunch of those, cooked up a meal and on the first day 120 families showed up, he filled the pots with food. The next day he didn't cook because he didn't think this was going to be sustainable when people showed up to his house and were like "Hey, where's the food?" These are kids and elderly people that we know and care for. We've interacted with those folks.

The next day he skipped, and at the end he said "Okay, I'll cook again." There is this leafy green in the Mediterranean, in Arabic, it's called khobiza or cheese weed. It looks like collard greens. They boiled it and added what they could find. He didn't have flour so he just improvised it, put in some salt and people liked it. 150 families showed up. They got food and were like "Wait, we have we have something going on now." He started with three pots now he's up to five pots and cooking every other day. In Ramadan, we're going pivot to make it a daily thing. A lot of people have been very generous in supporting this on the GoFundMe page. In fact, here's where the media played a positive role: there is a Palestinian photographer, a relative of ours, who is really gifted with photos. He shared a couple of pictures from the cooking days with me. They went viral because they were col-

or-contrasted. People were like, “Hey, this is great. How can I support you?” At the time I didn’t have a GoFundMe, I would just do it with a few friends. But now because a lot of people ask for it, I’m tired of people sending me money and Venmo and all that. I always tell people to support charities, but there are limitations in Gaza, so community-driven initiatives, like my brother’s and my friend’s, do the help to provide food. From that, it garnered some attention. I’m aware that there are other kitchens there, and our kitchen is a small solution. There are 200,000 to 300,000 families there. The most we can serve is 2000 people in one day. We’re part of the solution, but we want 20, we want 30 soup kitchens.

We also want the ceasefire, let’s treat this properly. We need a ceasefire, so humanitarian aid can get in, and the hostages can be free. We cannot do either of those things in an active war situation.

TFSR: Absolutely. Would you tell listeners how they can support that GoFundMe that you mentioned?

HA: You may share the link with the group, if you go to HotMeals4Gaza, you will see it there. You could make a gift, or you can share it. That’s another thing that’s been very helpful. We’re promising people we’re going to do more meals during Ramadan. We could not find an animal protein, so my brother said he would find a couple of lambs that he could serve for people because people are malnourished. This is why the whole issue is emotional. My own parents ate food meant for pigeons and rabbits. My mom said the smell was so bad that she only took one bite so she could take her diabetes medicine. These are humans. This is my mom. She’s 73 years old, she’s eating pigeon food, that their own cat refused. The cat was too good to eat the food that the family had to eat. Feeding a hungry child should not be a political statement. Unfortunately, somebody once said that you can’t see the US doing the right thing until they have tried everything else. I think that’s really manifesting itself in Gaza right now.

TFSR: Yeah, I unfortunately agree with you. I think it’s really lovely that people are doing community-based solutions. I am furious and horrified that people are in the position to have to do this. But I think it is a testament to folks’ ability to look at a situation and see what they can do to survive.

HA: Absolutely. And I assure you, my own mom wakes up at 5:00am. She does her morning prayer, and then she washes and cuts the veggies. Remember, she is still grieving for her boy and her grandkids. She lost her house, but she says she sleeps better at night when she does this because she fills some hungry child’s pot, and she

feels like “I did something.”

She’s doing it in memory of her loved ones. She just lost her brother who couldn’t get to the dialysis center because the hospital was blown up. People are dying in different ways that are caused by what’s going on. It’s not just bullets and rockets. It’s also a lack of medical care and lack of food. I don’t think any American would want people to starve like that.

TF SR: I certainly don’t think that, when faced with the reality of starvation, anybody would want to wish that on anybody else.

HA: I think most Americans agree with you. I’ve seen American generosity and I have seen notes from people who are sharing their solidarity. Somebody’s heart can be big enough to love the Palestinians and Israelis. This is not an “X, Y, or Z” thing, it’s a human thing. If anybody starved, everybody’s going to step up and come through for them. My brother, who’s been beaten up or abused in prison, lost his home and has very little dollars to his name, but he did this initiative and we wanted to be there for him and support him. He asked, “Can I cook tomorrow?” And I was like, “Yes!” Remember, they do not have refrigeration right now in Gaza. He bought a lot of veggies and he had to cook the next day because he said they would go bad otherwise. There are a lot of problems. At least we’re making fresh meals for people and I wish a lot more people would do that.

I’m aware of my Palestinian Americans who have family in Gaza doing a lot of that. My friend Sammy from the Bay Area, has been looking for lambs and giving meat to people. My friend Abdullah has given people tents. These are local people, Palestinians who want to help their families. Sadly, some people are also helping their families evacuate. You’ve seen that people have to pay “fees” to get out of Gaza. That’s not something I personally endorse or support, but people are welcome to pursue their joy. I want to focus in a way that helps support the resilience of the folks.

I fear, I really fear, and I told my brother, “Please don’t get bombed, please don’t be a target.” Because, anytime you have a crowd of people, mostly kids, and elderly people, I worry that a drone or something like that does not want such a gathering and I tell them to be safe. It is a true story; the zucchini supplier told him that his pickers got killed by a drone. I’m like, “Mahmoud, don’t be a hero. Help people, provide food, just don’t go in places you are not expected to be.”

TF SR: Indeed. You’ve spoken a few times about buying food in Gaza. Will you speak a little bit more about the reality of what it means to buy food right now? I was hearing reports of it being very, very expensive to buy food right now.

HA: Yeah, it's about 10 times the price. I'll give you a quick example: a box of potatoes in Gaza used to cost \$10. Now it's \$110. That's practically the only starch left in the north and if people can find it, they're willing to pay, because supplies are limited and demand is high. It's unfortunate. Carrots are a commodity. My brother hides the veggies he cooks with because he's afraid somebody, out of desperation, will want to have some of those carrots. These people are dignified, but the conditions of what they've been going through for the last six months just change you. I'm not going to pretend that everybody is an angel in Gaza: they are decent people; they love, they go to work, but also sometimes when they want to feed their families, they do things that they would not do otherwise. That's the case.

You've seen these airdrops that are practically robbing people of their dignity while giving them food for now, but it also is very chaotic, and very messy, and some people have been killed in those. There is a dignified solution that there is no political will behind, which is to let more trucks in. That's the solution. It's not cost-effective to drop things from the sky. I was reading yesterday that at least one little boy died from a parachute that they failed to designate to deploy. I welcome the aid. We want more aid, but we want it to be sustainable and in a way that's safe for everybody. Imagine an elderly person chasing a parachute in the sky or a little boy, or an orphan. My brother tells me a lot of orphans show up in the soup kitchen. We want to help people from the community, and there are a lot of challenges. I tried to establish a connection with my brother, but it was difficult, I tried to actually send money. It's a very tricky act of maneuvering in human assets. But we managed to do it because we love our people, and it's the right thing to do.

TFSR: Absolutely. I'm glad you brought up the airdrops. For me, thinking about this, it's impossible to think about it without thinking about the US government's complicity. I was wondering about your opinions on the airdropped crates of food and supplies, as well as the proposed plan to use the US military to build a temporary pier off of Gaza for the ostensible use of getting aid to people.

HA: Yeah. Speaking for myself, not any agency I'm affiliated with, I think those airdrops are meant to be a temporary solution, a drastic solution. I salute the people who are doing them. But at the end of the day, we know all these airdrops don't even fill a truck. We're talking about 500 trucks needed in Gaza. It's needed and people know that they need it. But ultimately, folks have some trust issues, or they have a lack of will, or maybe my own government does not put enough pressure on all parties to make sure these things happen.

I'm one of those people who is still engaged with the US government, despite many of my Palestinians telling me not to. At the end of the day, I'm not

engaging with a campaign or anything like that. As an American citizen, I have my rights. I've taken meetings with a lot of those folks from the White House or our Congress. Never great news, but we just want to make sure people say, "Hey, we're ready. We're real people. We're humans, we're talking to you. We're not the other." Some of those conversations have been difficult, but they require a certain level of patience, a certain level of maturity, and there is a lot of hurt in our community, since we don't feel heard. We don't feel seen. We also lost family members.

Unfortunately, American bombs are killing a lot of our people with little accountability. Accountability is important. And as an American citizen, I think that's not sustainable. I think in a few years, we're going to look back on this and say, "Wow, were we stupid." I hope more aid gets to Gaza, more aid gets to the north. And for a real solution, we need a durable solution. The painkillers may buy you 10 years, five years, three years, but then you're going to be back to square one. It just seems that there is little courage among the politicians to do something that resolves this issue for us.

TFSR: Indeed. I know that you said you did not want to be the story, I definitely understand and I'm sensitive to that. But I'm wondering if you would like to speak about your experiences doing journalism. You spoke a little bit about your experiences advocating in government and it's always a difficult position to be in when you're advocating on an uphill. But you've also been doing a lot of media appearances, upholding Palestine and Palestinians. Do you care to speak about your experiences within the last six months doing that? I know you've been doing it for longer than six months, too.

HA: Absolutely. At some point, you have to speak your truth and talk about your family. This is personal to me, it's not about a job or anything that. I've been fortunate enough to appear on several TV networks. I always appreciate the opportunity. I did a couple of op-eds for CNN, and the Times, to just share the truth from our side. There is no monopoly over truth. I have always been in good faith and wanted to get my voice out. Now, I have to admit that doing that in October was a lot harder than doing it right now. People were very heated, everybody was thinking, we're going to erase Gaza. You had a public figure on CNN that called for genocide on live American TV, and the anchor did not push back, and we're talking CNN. They're like that, but it's always been in a way that we want to amplify our voice, lift up our humanity, and tell people, "Look, this is what you're impacting. My family did not evacuate to the south, because X, Y, and Z." Because of the work I'm doing, sometimes we can connect that to the work.

Also speaking opportunities, I was invited and fortunate enough to go to the UN last week. I met with the UN Secretary-General, and met with members of

the Security Council, all of them. The ambassadors from China, Russia, and the US were there. I think they connected on the human level. We know that everybody agrees except the ambassador from the US, who was human. She cried when she heard these testimonies of the Palestinian victims, and I hope those tears will not go to waste and they will be actionable. We need a policy behind those tears. She was very human, Ambassador Linda, and I loved the opportunity. Some of my community members were like “Why are you meeting with the-?” There is civility in this country, we have to honor that. Even though sometimes our hearts are broken, our emotions are running high, I understand that. I don’t hate people who have a different opinion than me, but at the end of the day, civility is important. With these meetings at the UN and the European bloc, it was surreal, because I’m just a dad from Northern Virginia who takes their kids to school. Then you go to these meetings and you just try to speak your truth about your community, because we don’t really get an opportunity. When I got the first invite to go to the White House, I said a four-letter word. Then my colleagues talked some sense into me and said, “You’re going to be the only person from Gaza in that room, you’d better go.” Then I asked folks, and they said go. So I went, and that’s how the communication started. Now we talk, we talk, we talk, but I see very little action. Unfortunately, when I see the US coming through for Israel, it feels different than the way they show up for the Palestinians and our humanitarian needs.

TFSR: Indeed. I agree with that. In the beginning, in October, I was struck by the difference in the response to the war in Ukraine versus this situation.

HA: We see it, we take note. I want the Ukrainians to be safe and sound. I just wish for the same thing for our people in Palestine. Unfortunately, we’re not feeling that way right now. Remember, we’re not just getting the heat in Gaza. We’re also getting the heat here. You had the boy in Chicago who was killed, and then a few people in Vermont that were shot over a kufiya. We’ve seen people just bullying. Every week, I wake up to notes from people calling me names, they don’t know me. They just assume things and they just yell at me and email and I’m like, “Wow.” I won’t dignify that with an answer, because they know who I am. I don’t go and bully other folks. That’s just a heartbreaking reality.

TFSR: I have a question about the upcoming electoral season if you care to speak on it. We’re entering a national electoral season in an increasingly polarized USA. Do you see any roads forward from within the US to shift policy quick enough to stop this current genocide?

HA: I’d rather talk about the soup kitchen. But I tell people always to show up

and vote because that's how you count. That's how you matter. We see the folks in Michigan, 300,000 people that are maybe having a bigger influence than a lot of people because they have the power of the vote. We just have to show up and vote and people will be more conscious, nobody's going to be there with them at the ballot box. I always encourage people to vote and show up for the candidates that do the right thing.

I make sure to vote, I just voted in the primary in Virginia, which was last week. I encourage anybody who listens to participate in our democracy.

TFSR: Do you care to speak on how your family and other loved ones both in Gaza and in the US are doing right now?

HA: That's not an easy conversation. With my kids, we try not to engage in this. We try to give them breaks from it because it's my reality. They overhear me on the phone. They see me traveling or going to speak places and that's tough. We spent the summer in Gaza actually, my girls went there. They love Gaza, they love the families there, they love the memories. Pretty much everything has been erased now, so we have to explain that to them. We already joked that the summer vacation spot for us was Gaza. And now we don't have that option. Gaza has a nice beach. Our family's there, we have food, we can hang out.

It wasn't an easy life. I don't want to make it sound like Gaza was fancy before October 7. It wasn't, there were difficulties. For example, I wrote on Facebook in July: I am paying in Gaza six times the price Americans pay for electricity, for example, or double the price of gas. Here, we complain it's a five cents increase, in Gaza which has \$7 a day earning income, double the price of fuel. A lot of those conversations are impacting our families. Obviously, we're not done with this. My parents are still in the danger zone. My sister is in the south, in Rafah. We don't know what's going to happen. We worry. God forbid, my dad has another heart attack or something like that. Nothing to do with the conflict—well, maybe it has a little bit. But then what hospital will take him? The Indonesian Hospital and Al-Shifa Hospital, are where people go for serious things, but none of those places are functioning. There are just people dying left or right and there is no capacity to take care of them. This is really sad because we know that at least 70% of the victims are women and children. Not that men are disposable, but this is to make a point that folks are not really involved in this conflict. If you want to take it further, the kids have nothing to do with any election that you're citing as an excuse to harm the people in Gaza.

TFSR: Indeed. There's a whole narrative of the ethics of war and how this current assault on Gaza is contravening all of those so-called ethics of war.

HA: Yeah, one thing I shared with the ambassadors of the EU, the big institutionalists, they love the universal and international law. I've told them basically my truth and saying this as a Palestinian who's hurting for his family: "Everybody has failed us, even these institutions." I went to Model UN, I believe in dialogue and all that. I said, "People in Gaza think differently of the Red Cross," for example, because they called and nobody picked up. People think differently of any UN relief agency because they were ordered to leave areas or not to serve. The international law people have not stepped up. Everybody acts like they are a banana republic all of a sudden, and nobody has any power. So how do we restore that faith? I don't know. I want people to believe in these institutions. But in Gaza, that's not possible. Nobody came through for them. And it's unfortunate. I'm in search of something that gives me hope. I hope that what you suggested about the pier or the port, is going to bring some aid. But again, there's an easier way: let the trucks in. But people are not doing that, so we'll see where we land.

TFSR: So besides UNRWA, which you spoke a lot about, would you actually recommend that people donate to UNRWA?

HA: If people want to go to unrwausa.org and learn about the organization and see how we can support it, there are a number of interventions. People can look at and do the research. I love the work we are doing in the USA, and I have full faith and confidence in the agency to do the work that needs to be done. There are also other actors and I am a big fan of a group called PAMA, Palestinian American Medical Association. They are doing their third medical mission in Gaza right now. I worked for ANERA, it has food programs there. PCRf and HEAL, are two organizations that help evacuate medical folks to get treatment. And so many others, but right now, they're not having the impact they want to have, despite having all the resources, because of the political gridlock and the lack of will on the Israeli side, unfortunately, to bring in more. A lot of those NGOs have the funds right now, but they're not able to deploy it as soon as they want to, or to the level they need to because they understand there are limitations on what goes into Gaza right now. I don't want to point any fingers.

TFSR: No, of course not. I think political gridlock is a really good way of articulating that. It really seems like that to me, just from an outside perspective.

HA: I don't really want to make it sound like it's Congress, doesn't decide... 5% of the people in Gaza are either killed, injured, or missing. 5%, think about this, in the US what would 5% be? That's what we're dealing with on top of the gridlock, on

top of the starvation, on top of the lack of medical care.

My cousin Mahmoud, is named like my brother, he died two weeks after he had been shot in the foot. Because there is no medical care, there is no medical sanitation or products to keep clean his wound. And unfortunately, he had to be buried. He didn't have to die. But that's where the reality is, that's what I mentioned earlier about people dying in different ways.

To wrap it up on a positive note, I think, initiatives that are community driven will always be as much as we're available. So my brother Mahmoud is cooking in his soup kitchen and helping people in his neighborhood. I hope other people in their neighborhood support the kitchen like that, or an initiative that will help bring people food. But again, Gaza cannot do it alone. You need more aid because people in Gaza lost everything. And they need everything. I think that everyone failed Gaza, but the land did not. Because there's still some crops despite having the equivalent of I'm not sure how many nuclear bombs dropped in Gaza right now. People are still standing. Still proud Palestinians, but they are extremely tired and broken right now.

TFSR: We're going to wrap up the interview here in a little while, but you've talked extensively about your brother Mahmoud's soup kitchen. Are there any other groups on the ground besides UNRWA in Palestine that you would to uplift or speak briefly about or tell listeners how to support?

HA: I tell people things like "Ask if this charity was already in Gaza before October 7, and if they have local staff." Because these are metrics that help you decide if those folks have a good impact and then you always ask the questions that you like to ask. Some people are too concerned about the overhead. Right now, I really want to support any NGO that's able to do any work in Gaza. It's hard. Even folks in Rafah and in the south are not having an easy lifestyle. The north is being starved, the south--imagine dignified people, they don't have \$10 to donate to buy something, what dignity? There are no ATMs, there is no bank. Some people actually have a salary they pay. They can't because the ATMs are gone. For a lot more people, it's harder. There are very few forms of life support in the north right now. As I mentioned earlier, ANERA, UNRWA USA, PAMA, HEAL, PCRFB --great organizations. Do your own research, and always see what your priorities are in life. What change do you want to see in the world? It's public knowledge that UNRWA is the largest humanitarian actor inside Gaza with 13,000 staff. So that's the kind of impact, and all these UN agencies work through UNRWA. I'd like to see them being funded.

TFSR: UNRWA's website is very detailed in how to support, how to get

involved, all of these things. If folks are interested, I would suggest checking it out.

Those are all the questions that I had written up. Is there anything you want to give voice to before we end?

HA: I would just tell people, whatever they believe in, if they want to pray for peace, they should. If they want to speak out, if they want to center Palestinian voices, this is essential. In fact, we're having to fight to get our voices out there. We're getting unjustly targeted by certain groups and things like that. I just want people to really make good decisions about this and read for themselves. It is not a black-and-white issue. What is going on in Gaza is definitely clear. One of the biggest and most impactful things I saw when I went to the rally for the Jewish Voice for Peace. My wife and I went in October and it was really eye-opening for me because I saw a sign that spoke to me on a deep level. It said, "My grief is not your weapon." That's the one that's really had an impact on me. That was in October, still people were grieving and all of us were hurting at that time. I felt like these folks showed up, and I felt their solidarity.

TFSR: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us. I realize you have a very, very busy schedule, and I feel very blessed that you were able to come and speak with us.

HA: Thank you so much for this opportunity. And again, continue to talk about this as much as you can.

TFSR: Absolutely. Thank you so much.

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